DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 417 623 HE 031 052

TITLE	Workshop on the Management of International Co-operation in Universities (Penang, Malaysia, May 9-10, 1997).
INSTITUTION	Commonwealth Secretariat, London (England).
PUB DATE	1997-05-9
NOTE	44p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Commonwealth Secretariat, Education Department, Human Resource Development Division, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, England, United Kingdom.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*College Students; *Developing Nations; *Foreign Countries; Foreign Students; Higher Education; *International Educational Exchange; Program Administration; Program Costs; *Program Implementation; Program Improvement; *Student Exchange Programs; Student Recruitment; Teacher Exchange Programs; Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS	*British Commonwealth; Edith Cowan University (Australia); Universiti Sains Malaysia; University of Guelph (Ontario)

ABSTRACT

International cooperation and student exchange were considered at this 1997 workshop attended by representatives of 27 universities from 15 British Commonwealth countries. The majority of workshops participants were administrators involved in international programs. A keynote address discussed the Commonwealth Universities Study Abroad Consortium in a theoretical context against a background of European experience of internationalization. An agenda was presented for universities contemplating extending their international activities, with particular reference to developing countries. Small group sessions considered possible objectives of international programs, concerns of academic staff if they became involved in international activities, the recruitment of students from abroad as well as sending students to study at a foreign university, financing international programs, and program administration. The workshop also addressed the experience of the University Sains Malaysia (USM), and the functioning of the International Offices at Edith Cowan University (Australia) and the University of Guelph (Ontario, Canada). Appendices provide: a list of workshop participants; the text of the keynote address (Hilary Callan); and the paper "Managing International Student Study Abroad Scheme: USM's Experience" (Puan Sri Fauziah Shahrom).(SW)

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ED 417 623

Commonwealth Universities Studies Abroad Consortium
(CUSAC)

Workshop on the Management of International Co-operation in Universities

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

9-10 May 1997

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Commonwealth Universities Studies Abroad Consortium
(CUSAC)

Workshop on the Management of International Co-operation in Universities

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

9-10 May 1997

Commonwealth Secretariat

Commonwealth Secretariat
Education Department
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Workshop
on the
Management of International
Co-operation in Universities

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia, 9-10 May, 1997

Introduction

The workshop was held immediately after the Third Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Universities Study Abroad Consortium (CUSAC), upon which a separate report has been published. It was designed to provide an introduction to some of the practical dimensions of international student exchange under CUSAC, but also to extend this to consideration of some of the broader dimensions of international co-operation.

Participation

There were 42 participants, from 27 different universities in 15 Commonwealth countries. Most had also taken part in the CUSAC meeting, and discussion therefore tended to concentrate on CUSAC arrangements. Nineteen were from four universities in Malaysia, including 12 from the host, Universiti Sains Malaysia. The great majority were administrators involved in international programmes; six were Vice Chancellors. Resource persons included Hilary Callan, Executive Director of the European Association for International Education, Geoffrey Caston, formerly Vice Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, and three senior officers of the Commonwealth Secretariat. A full list is at Appendix 1.

Organisation

The Workshop opened with a keynote presentation by Hilary Callan which set CUSAC in a theoretical context against a background of European experience of internationalisation. This was followed by Geoffrey Caston's outline of an agenda for universities contemplating extension of their international activities, with particular reference to developing countries. This also formed the agenda for subsequent discussion in five small groups.

There followed a full exposition of the experience of the Universiti Sains Malaysia, supplemented with moving and insightful descriptions by three students of their own periods of study abroad. This session was felt by many to be the highlight of the Workshop, and certainly offered much stimulation to the informal discussion which ensued. On the second day, the Directors of

International Offices at Edith Cowan University (Australia) and the University of Guelph (Canada) described their own organisations, with subsequent discussion.

Only a day and a half were available in all, and this perhaps did not permit sufficient small group discussion for the exchange of experience and the study of cases, as many would have liked.

Keynote address

Hilary Callan's presentation (full text at Appendix 2) placed CUSAC within the broader context of university internationalisation strategies. She described several different approaches: those concerned with 'activities' such as student and staff exchanges, with 'competency' such as the development of personal skills, with the development of an international institutional 'culture', or with overall institutional strategy or 'process'. She then considered various different rationales for internationalisation, and the interests in it of different 'stakeholders' (governments, students, parents, employers, etc.). Various models of the overall posture of universities with regard to international commitments and activities were portrayed. Finally, she reviewed the constraints upon internationalisation, including the sustainability of programmes, inequalities of access, financial resources and the need to establish 'parity' of respect between often unequal partners. In this last dimension, she felt that human qualities and relations were particularly important, that the Commonwealth was relatively in the qualities and capacities required, and the prospects for CUSAC therefore good.

Agenda for Developing Countries

Geoffrey Caston set out a check-list of matters to which attention should be paid by universities reviewing their international programmes, or about to set one up. He stressed that there were no general recipes for success, and that each university would have to seek its own solutions in the light of its own political and economic environment and its own priorities. He referred participants to a recent UNESCO publication containing six country case studies (Geoffrey Caston: *The Management of International Co-operation in Universities*: UNESCO Papers on Higher Education No. 16, Paris). The categories which follow were each considered by one of five small groups, who reported back to a plenary session of the Workshop.

Purposes
The first requirement was an attempt to get a clear, and preferably consensual, idea of why the institution was having an international programme at all. This would help it to establish priorities between different types of activity. Among the possible motives were:

- expand staff horizons; keep them up to date
- maintain international recognition and standards
- maintain inflow of international knowledge and technology
- enrich the educational and research environment for home staff and students by diversifying the student and staff bodies
- bring in financial and other resources (which could then be used for other purposes) by selling higher education overseas, and thus profiting from the university's capacity as an export industry

- contribute to the breakdown of global divisions between rich and poor, North and South, different ethnic groups and cultures

The group that discussed this found all these to be relevant motives, but attached particular importance to the need for an institution to break down isolation and operate beyond political boundaries if it was to remain competitive and serve its society by developing international cultural understanding.

Staff

The concerns of academic staff had to be addressed if they were to become involved in international activities. The following points needed to be considered:

- incentives to be provided for work abroad and for conferences. These might include credit towards promotion, special leave, and financial provision for travel and additional living costs
- to maintain staff diversity, temporary or permanent appointments of foreign staff might be made, after international advertisement. Appropriate balance with national staff to be established, and government might need to be persuaded to grant work permits. Short-term visiting fellowships should be considered.
- the possibility of staff exchange schemes should be investigated along with links with overseas universities or departments.
- to maintain standards, a quota of external advisers and examiners might be appointed from overseas universities.
- investment was needed in foreign journals, and facilities for easy international communication.

The discussion group laid particular emphasis on providing local staff with opportunities for travel overseas for a range of academic purposes. It also stressed the difficulty of providing adequately for visiting staff, in terms of office and living accommodation, travel, and possibly for top-up salaries. The importance of communication facilities was also stressed, particularly access to e-mail and the Internet.

Students

The recruitment of students from abroad offered great advantages; so did the provision of opportunities for the home students to study for part of their courses in a foreign university. The following issues must be dealt with:

- Marketing places for overseas students: this has been done vigorously by some developed countries. Importance of recognition that developing countries also have a special and worthwhile educational experience to sell.
- The curriculum might need to be adapted to the needs of overseas students, who would probably be graduating from their home universities. Modules can be devised which will fit into the degrees of home universities, and in some cases special programmes can be designed. Special assessment arrangements may be needed to meet the requirements of home universities.

- Accommodation and food suitable for foreign students must be provided, remembering that a balance needs to be struck between their wish to experience a different culture, and their need not to feel disabling culture shock and discomfort.
- Special welfare and counselling support will be needed for foreign students likely to have more, and different, problems. Special provision was also needed for medical attention, and health insurance.
- Immigration and other bureaucratic difficulties with government have to be sorted out.
- Flexibility is needed in giving academic credit to the work of own students spending time abroad.

The group felt that many of these problems could be, and were being, dealt with; the incompatibility of assessment systems was among the more difficult. Counselling systems needed to be strengthened, and it was important to educate governments and society generally to the desirability of receiving foreign students, who were not always perceived as educational assets.

Finance

Almost all of the special provisions required by an international programme involve additional cost. In most countries, for example, home students are heavily subsidised, mostly by the government, which is unlikely to extend the subsidy to foreign students, however strong a case is made out. This is especially the case when there is already pressure from home students on scarce staff and other resources; in that case, a special fee becomes necessary.

- How should such a fee be calculated? Should it meet the full economic cost of the foreign student? Including a contribution to capital costs? Should it be more than the full economic cost, if the market permits? If so, should any 'profit' go to the University, to the Department, or perhaps to support other international activities, or in scholarships?
- Support for students or staff going abroad may be met from university funds, from scholarships or fellowships awarded by either university involved, from students' personal resources, from 'aid' funds, or from funds raised privately for the purpose.
- Mutual fee waivers by universities exchanging students may be a solution, especially with CUSAC-type schemes.

There was general agreement that finance was the principal obstacle to the development of international exchanges, especially the movement of students and staff. It was felt that bilateral agreements between universities to cover the waiver of tuition fees and the provision of accommodation were particularly important. Universities should set up a special fund to assist travel and other costs, sourced from private donations, governments, aid funds and others. Help was needed in the form of promotional material for this purpose.

Organisation

Internationalisation could not succeed without special organisational arrangements within the university. Points to consider were:

- extent of the commitment of top administration (and also of the government). Was internationalisation a main or only a marginal objective of the institution?
- centralisation/decentralisation. Was the main responsibility for international activities to lie with the central administration or with the departments? If shared between them, then which of the many issues above were to rest where? Importance of clear responsibilities.
- extent of special organisation depends upon size, but at the very minimum requires some place in the administrative organisation identified as an International Office. Need to define its scope compared with other administrative units, e.g. admissions, finance.
- need to mobilise support within the faculty, for whom internationalisation involves extra work.
- enhancement of international administrative communications was essential. Speedy responses to foreign sponsors were an important ingredient of success.

The group agreed that these were the key questions, and were inclined to favour the more centralised type of organisation, with an international office supported actively by the Vice Chancellor.

The Experience of the Universiti Sains Malaysia

Puan Sri Fauziah Shahrom, Deputy Registrar at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), presented a paper on Managing International Student Study Abroad Scheme, both in and out of CUSAC (full text in Appendix 3). After a brief description of USM's general international activities, she described the Study Abroad Scheme from its beginnings in 1984 to its expansion in 1997, when 59 USM students were studying abroad, and 45 foreign students were spending time at USM. An International Office had been set up in 1994 to manage the Scheme, and deal with such questions as credit transfer, living costs, negotiation with foreign universities, language requirements, selection of students. Funding was by a combination of fee waivers, personal funds and assistance from the University for those in need.

The active involvement of the Vice Chancellor and Deans had contributed greatly to the success of the Scheme. A target of at least 1 per cent participation in each school had been set for 2000, and in spite of the challenge this presented for the future, there was every hope of meeting it.

The International Office

In a panel discussion, Dr Shute and Dr Hunter described the organisation and operation of the international offices at the University of Guelph and Edith Cowan which they respectively directed. Interesting differences in approach were brought out by the discussion. The Australian pattern was much more highly centralised, with a relatively large staff responsible for foreign student recruitment and admissions as well as financial and welfare support. At Guelph, however, the Centre for International Programmes has a very small staff, with the responsibility for initiating, managing and reporting on international activities resting with academic departments. In both models, however, there were signs of movement towards the other, suggesting that in most cases some practical combination of the two approaches would be needed.

Evaluation

A formal evaluation questionnaire elicited 16 responses, all of which rated the Workshop as 'effective' up to 'very effective'. From the questionnaires and the discussion, it was clear that more opportunities for discussion of case studies would have been welcome, as would more work in small groups. There was an unresolved question about whether the event was about CUSAC or about international management in general; those concerned more with CUSAC tended to find the Steering Committee the more interesting part of their week. Participants would have liked to have more advice on fundraising, and it was unfortunate that the expert resource person on this was unable to come. There was, however, a consensus that more occasions for those concerned with the management of international cooperation in higher education to learn from each other would be highly desirable.

Appendices

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Appendix 2:

International Co-operation in Universities

Summary of Opening Presentation

to CUSAC Workshop, Penang, Malaysia, 9 May 1997

By Hilary Callan

Madam Chair, distinguished colleagues,

I vividly remember the inspiring keynote address given by Professor Lalage Bown to the Commonwealth Secretariat Workshop in Singapore in April 1992, which I was privileged to attend and at which the foundation stones of CUSAC were laid. Lalage said on that occasion:

> It is in the nature of universities to have international connections and that those connections should be developed not only through staff mobility but also through the mobility of students, seen as major contributors to the culture and character of their university communities.

In her introduction to the book based on the Singapore workshop, Lalage also wrote that

> Sending students abroad and welcoming students from abroad is a necessary part of any strategy for maintaining the international character of universities.

Five years on, Lalage's words have not lost but rather have gained in force. Universities are international organisms which must find new ways of being international; not least because the world in which they operate is itself becoming international or global in new ways: global economies, transnational labour markets, the borderless world of the communications revolution: the list is long and by now familiar. These forces for internationality stand in various kinds of balance with counter-pressures: nation-building, the conservation of national or regional cultural richness, provision of services to local constituencies which universities have an equal responsibility to serve. So the drive towards internationalism in universities is differently balanced in different environments against other pressures and imperatives.

The idea of internationalism also carries very different meanings in different contexts and traditions. For this group there is no need to labour the point: but the approaches to internationalisation of its operations by a university where the emphasis is on, say, revenue generation through foreign student recruitment, will clearly differ from that of one responding to a call, say, to Europeanise its profile in order to qualify for Community funding.

We have just completed a Steering meeting on CUSAC which I have found fascinating and from which I have personally learned a great deal. CUSAC, of course, focuses on study abroad within the Commonwealth. For this workshop, I interpret my task more broadly: as that of offering

thoughts on the broader context of CUSAC; what such a single programme perhaps needs to be part of; what might be its place within the larger strategies for internationalisation of participating universities. So I shall attempt a 'sketch map' of a portion of the field, and offer a small sample of discussions in which I and my colleagues are engaged on strategies for internationalisation of universities. My perspective is predominantly (though not exclusively) European, and I hope in all humility that it will have some relevance to that of the Commonwealth; but please remember that European education is highly diverse and it is no more possible or respectable to speak of a uniform 'pan-European model' for education than it would be to do the same in respect of all 'developing' or indeed all 'developed' countries.

The fundamental point I want to suggest is that while CUSAC indeed merits development as a *horizontal* programme, linking Commonwealth universities together in innovative ways, consideration should also be given to *ways of integrating* CUSAC 'vertically' into the overall international strategies of participating institutions. What is the university's strategic framework for participating in a programme such as CUSAC? Is the programme an isolated activity kept going by enthusiasts through personal contacts, or is this enthusiasm backed by a clear vision within the University of the role of the programme in taking the institution in a direction it wants to go? What happens if co-operating partners within the consortium are out of balance in this respect? Given that CUSAC is at present a small-scale (though in my opinion a very important) programme, under what circumstances are universities able to 'harvest' its benefits in order to catalyse further good effects? Several of these questions have already been raised in the course of the Steering meeting discussions on the future of CUSAC. Comments have been made on CUSAC's contribution to setting Commonwealth-wide standards of quality; to the multiplier effects CUSAC could stimulate within institutions; to its value as an instrument for networking among institutions of differing types and situations. Here, I will focus on the strategic framework at the level of the institution.

Concepts of internationalisation (*what* are we trying to do?)

No single view or consensus exists on what constitutes internationalisation of universities. One of the more successful of recent attempts to formulate a concept of internationalisation of higher education at the level of the institution is as follows:

> ... the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution (adapted from Knight 1997).

Note that this formulation focuses on effects, and leaves open a bundle of questions about execution and the routes through which the effects (on teaching, research and service) are to be brought about.

Approaches to internationalisation (what *processes* are involved?)

Following and adapting Knight's approach (1997), a rough typology can be constructed of ways in which both practitioners and researchers into internationalisation of education have tried to characterise the processes involved:

The 'Activity' approach
This is in many ways the traditional and most familiar approach, comprising measures of, for example:

- student/staff exchange/mobility in 'managed' programmes
- international student recruitment
- technical assistance
- research co-operation
- curricular reform/restructuring

The 'Competency' approach
This approach focuses on outcomes and goals as measured by 'added value' of internationalisation to the professional and personal development of individuals: broadly, the development of new/enhanced knowledge/skills/competence in students, graduates, faculty, other institutional staff.

The 'Cultural' approach
This focuses on organisational outcomes and goals; such as creating an international culture, or a climate which welcomes cultural diversity, on campuses.

The 'Process' or strategic approach
This is an analytical approach in which elements of the above are combined; it seeks to measure the capacity of institutions to develop an integrated strategy incorporating activities and outcomes in a planned way to achieve the 'international dimension' as a systemic feature of the institution.

With specific reference to CUSAC, the programme's potential might be best realised by encouraging its impact to be studied not only as part of an 'activity-based' approach, but also in the frames of competency-building, cultural enrichment, and strategic value.

Rationales and incentives for internationalisation (*Why* internationalise?)

What does an institution gain, or hope to gain, by embarking on (and investing in) a greater international presence? There seem to be at least five basic categories of incentive: academic; economic and financial; cultural and social; political and diplomatic; and negative incentives.

Of these, the first four are fairly transparent, and there are standard arguments in support of each. I add the fifth because 'negative' incentives and rationales can be real ones. Where an entire system or sector is moving towards greater international involvement, the fear of 'missing the boat' by not following the trend can be a powerful incentive, especially where access to funding is part of the picture.

With specific reference to CUSAC, most of these rationales are clearly articulated in the programme's aims and founding documents. However, in evaluating the programme in practice it might be well to consider how a particular institution's participation in CUSAC might be coloured by its overall motivation for internationalisation. Having a taxonomy of institutional rationales, even a rough one, enables questions to be asked, and comparisons made, about

institutions' specific incentives for participation and investment in the programme. Further questions arise about how far institutions can work together as partners in the programme if their perceptions of the general advantages of internationalisation are radically different.

The institution as actor/stakeholder in international activity

So far, I have been speaking of 'the institution' as if it were a single actor with a unitary perspective and interest in developing international links. But we need to deconstruct this convenient way of speaking; we need a 'double vision' of the nature of the institution in its external and internal environments.

At a macro-level which sets the institution in its larger environment, *the institution can be represented as one of a large number of 'stakeholders'* (to use a now unpopular term) in the international dimensions of education. Other stakeholders may or may not constitute organised constituencies; and their interests can coincide, conflict or overlap with those of the institution. They include, for example:

- Governmental and intergovernmental bodies
- Other academic stakeholders such as discipline-based associations and professional organisations
- Industry, labour markets and the commercial sector in general
- Sponsors and funders of research, scholarship, exchange and other programmes
- Community-based organisations and groups
- Parents and families of students (especially those meeting the costs of study)

With reference to CUSAC, it is clear that macro-stakeholders in the programme, as well as participating institutions, include the Commonwealth itself, and member governments and education ministries where applicable. In the planned evolution of CUSAC they will certainly include donors and sponsors to be targeted under the above heads. Hence the case in support of CUSAC needs to be made in the frame of the larger stakeholder group, to each member of which the importance of CUSAC in relation to its agendas needs to be made apparent.

At a micro-level which focuses down on the internal makeup of institutions, it is likewise important to recognise that, with respect to international activities, *the institution is a coalition of component stakeholders*. This is another way of reminding ourselves that educational institutions, like other organisations, are themselves political arenas in which interests may once again coincide, conflict or overlap; and in which there may be shifting or contingent alliances among groups. The latter will include, for example:

- Central governance and administration
- Faculty and academic staff
- Students, their sub-groups and leaders
- Managers and programme administrators
- Support and ancillary staff

With reference to the future of CUSAC, it seems important within this frame (a) to identify internal stakeholders and mobilise them in support of the programme; and (b) in general to mobilise a constituency of support for CUSAC, in the broad context of international educational co-operation, spanning 'stakeholders' internal and external to institutions, whose interests can be shown to coincide.

Models of internationalisation

I would like now to turn briefly to some of the work which has been taking place over the past year or so, and currently, to 'modelling' the international dimension of education at university level. I want to outline two current models, each of which transects the international dimension of a university in a different way, and both of which offer us food for thought about CUSAC, its context and future.

The first is a model (adapted from van Dijk 1995) based on Dutch research and developed from earlier work by John Davies and others, which locates the international activity of a university along three dimensions or axes, conceptualised as varying independently: the dimensions of policy commitment, of policy support, and of policy implementation. The dimension of policy commitment varies from 'marginal' at one pole to 'central' at the other; that of support from 'one-sided' (top-down or bottom-up) to 'interactive'; and that of policy implementation from 'ad hoc' to 'systematic'. Thus is generated a three-dimensional matrix containing eight cells which represent combinations of each pole of the three axes; as follows:

	Commitment	*Support*	*Implementation*
1	marginal	one-sided	ad hoc
2	marginal	one-sided	systematic
3	marginal	interactive	ad hoc
4	marginal	interactive	systematic
5	central	one-sided	ad hoc
6	central	one-sided	systematic
7	central	interactive	ad hoc
8	central	interactive	systematic

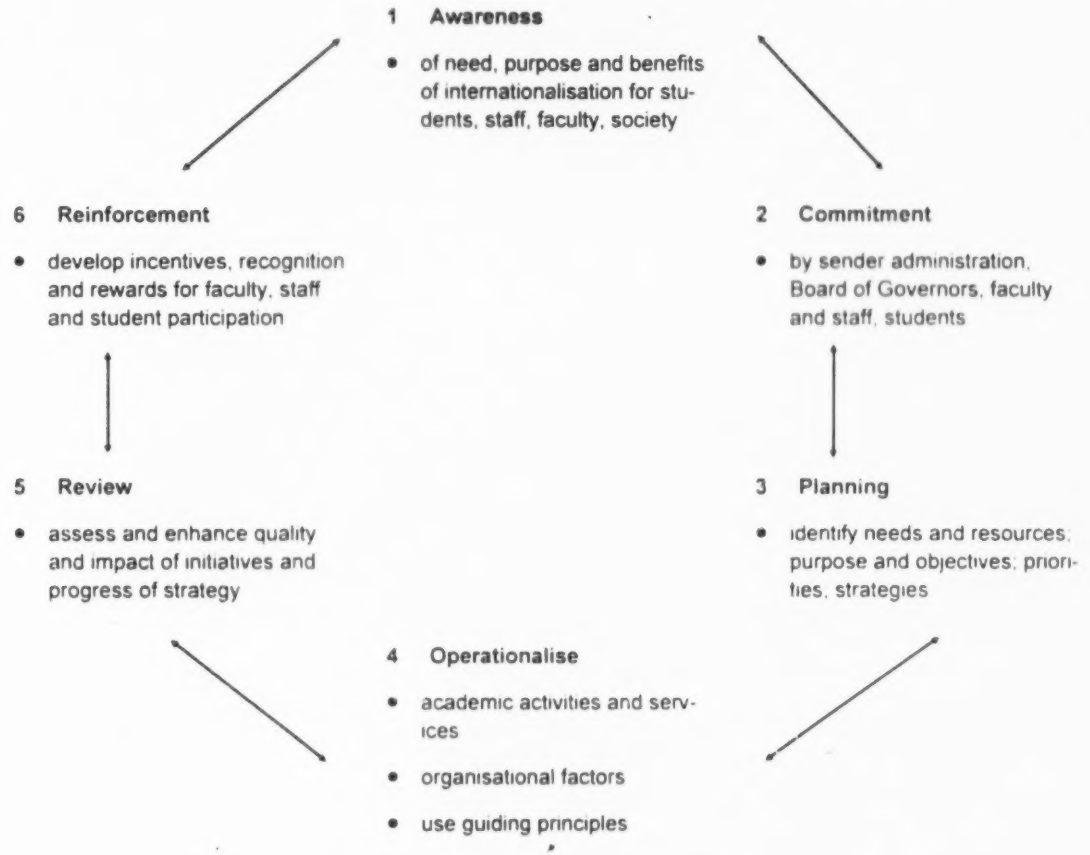
(Adapted from van Dijk 1995)

This model was developed as a way of describing the overall posture of universities with regard to international commitments and activities. It can be used statically, to describe fixed states, or dynamically, to describe movement from one state to another in any direction. Examples: an institution in cell 1 would be one in which international links are thought to be 'a good thing' but not central to the university's task; impetus comes only from the institutional head or (alternatively) from individual staff members without co-ordination; action is intermittent and not sustained. An institution in cell 6 would be one in which international links are accepted as an essential part of the university's mission; it has a 'decentralised' governance structure which gives responsibility to faculties or individual staff for developing and managing international links; but initiatives at this level are co-ordinated, sustained and evaluated through a faculty-level instrument such as an 'international committee'. And so on.

With reference to CUSAC, we can use a model such as this to shed light on the institutional policy framework in which participation in the scheme is managed. For example: among universities which are partners in CUSAC exchanges, institutional strategies for international relations in general, and also their commitments to CUSAC, can be *symmetrical* in relation to the matrix, or they can be *asymmetrical* in a large permutation of ways. What are the potential consequences for the partnership, the particular CUSAC exchange, for the consortium itself? Are certain asymmetries healthy in their consequences; others a recipe for disaster; and what makes the difference?

My second model is a cyclic one, and I have adapted it with permission from Knight & de Wit (1997). It complements the multidimensional model in a very useful way, by stressing the fluid, multidirectional nature of the policy process. It also shows how institutional strategies for becoming more international can be consolidated through a continual process of learning by results.

Internationalising a university: a cyclic model


1 Awareness
• of need, purpose and benefits of internationalisation for students, staff, faculty, society
2 Commitment
• by sender administration, Board of Governors, faculty and staff, students
3 Planning
• identify needs and resources; purpose and objectives; priorities; strategies
4 Operationalise
• academic activities and services
• organisational factors
• use guiding principles
5 Review
• assess and enhance quality and impact of initiatives and progress of strategy
6 Reinforcement
• develop incentives, recognition and rewards for faculty, staff and student participation

Basic precondition: a supportive culture to integrate internationalisation

(Adapted from: Knight, J. & de Wit, H. 1995, in de Wit, H. (ed) *Strategies for Internationalisation of Higher Education*)

In relation to CUSAC, a model such as this is once again valuable. At programme level, firstly, it can be applied to the execution of the programme itself and to provision in participating universities for CUSAC actions to be reviewed and reinforced on a continuing basis. At strategy level, secondly, it encourages both the programme managers and participating institutions to consider what presence CUSAC has in the strategic process at each phase of the cycle.

Constraints and limitations

In conclusion I would like to offer a few words about constraints and limitations to development of the international dimensions of higher education. These are depressingly familiar; and the European experience has no magic solutions to offer. The following seem to me to be the major problematic issues: some may be resolved, or partly so, in the long term; others are likely to remain intractable.

- Technical problems relating to mobility; e.g. academic recognition of study periods abroad; legal status of persons on cross-national placements or research contracts; non-compatible academic calendars; language (less a problem for CUSAC and other Commonwealth programmes than for European ones)
- Sustainability of programmes and links
- Inequalities of access; the danger of creating 'programmes for the elite'; the need to provide for the 'non-mobile majority' who for reasons of financial or other personal circumstances will never be able to participate in mobility activities
- Parity: the problem of constructing educational co-operation 'on equal terms' between institutional partners which are manifestly unequal in situation
- Resources, resources, resources ... There is no visible solution to this problem; only the use of imagination to go round it.

With regard to *sustainability*, both in general and for CUSAC, what seems necessary is for institutions to consider what they can do to make themselves an attractive partner for long-term relationships. One way to do this is by investing in professional development and training of staff involved in the running of partnerships and links, so building a stable professional body with whom partners will find it rewarding to deal.

The issue of *parity* was, as it happens, the special theme of my own organisation's last Annual Conference, held in Budapest last December. In it we tried to look honestly and seriously at the question with reference to 'East-West', but also to 'North-South', educational co-operation. Our opening keynote speaker was Lesley Wilson, Director of the CEPES-UNESCO Centre in Bucharest; and I cannot do better than cite her reflections on the dilemma of achieving parity of esteem (and I would also say of honour) between partners where wealth, conditions and support are grossly unequal:

> Institutions and faculties have to know what they want ... both individual and institutional commitment are crucial to the long-term success and sustainability of relations on equal terms.

> Each partner has to contribute something of value to the relationship ... For example, one partner provides high level learners while the other provides high quality teachers, creating a balance of value between input and output.
>
> In the last resort, working together on equal terms has to do with the organic growth of relations between partners. It comes down to human relations - to respect, to listening to and understanding the needs of the other side; to trust, confidence and fairness in dealing with others despite objective differences in resources and experience.

There are no magic solutions to the problem of achieving parity in this, deeply moral, sense. It is my belief that while organisational commitments and appropriate instruments are necessary conditions, they are only part of the story. You need individual commitments and enthusiasms, sustained by organisational structures, to light the flame and keep it burning. I would argue that these qualities, and the capacities for generosity and fairness which Lesley Wilson calls for, are precisely the ones in which the Commonwealth is strong. If I am right, then, judged by global measures and in face of the difficulties and limitations which must be recognised, the prospects for Commonwealth-based education in general and for CUSAC in particular are good.

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Appendix 3:

Managing International Student Study Abroad Scheme:

USM's Experience

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1. Objective

The objective of this paper is to present and to share the experience of USM in managing Student Study Abroad Scheme (SSAS) within and without the ambit of CUSAC.

2. Background

SSAS was first mooted by the University as part of its internationalisation efforts. Internationalisation however is not confined merely to SSAS but encompasses a broad spectrum of the University's activities which in turn significantly influence the University's structure and composition. Notable among these are:

2.1 Internationalisation in Teaching

There has been a deliberate effort since inception to encourage internationalisation in teaching so as to provide the students with a variety of experience and knowledge. This is achieved principally through the recruitment of a significant number of overseas teaching staff. Even today, when we consider ourselves self-sufficient with our own local staff, USM still maintains a policy to have at least 10% of its academic staff as expatriate.

2.2 Training of Academic Staff

Realising that internationalisation of the University must begin with its academic staff, USM requires all its local staff to have at least part of their academic training abroad. Today 83% of our staff had their Masters qualifications overseas compared to only 17% from Malaysia. Of this 83%, 40% had their Masters from the United States, 30% from Britain, 8% from New Zealand, 2.7% from Canada and 2.3% from Australia.

In the case of staff with Ph.D, 56% attained their qualification from Britain, 23.5% from the United States, 5.5% from Australia, 3% from Canada and the remaining from other countries including Malaysia.

At USM, academic staff training leading to a higher degree is sponsored principally by the University under its ASTS and ASHES programme. A total of 222 staff are presently working for their higher degrees overseas under the two schemes.

2.3 Research and Publication

All academic staff are encouraged to collaborate with their overseas counterparts in research and to publish their work in international journals. Research grants are readily available from within and outside the University.

2.4 Sabbatical Leave

Every academic staff is granted the privilege of a full-pay 6 months to 9 months sabbatical leave overseas once every 3 to 5 years. This gives the opportunity to staff to establish or to renew their academic relationships in teaching and research with their overseas colleagues thereby contributing significantly to the internationalisation efforts of the University.

2.5 Staff Exchange

A variety of programmes encourages staff exchange with overseas institutions. ASAIHL for example encourages exchange between universities in the Asian region. The Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science encourages exchange with universities in Japan. The British Council, the Malaysian-American Commission on Educational Exchange and the Australian International Development Programme promote staff exchange with Britain, United States and Australia respectively. In addition, there are also a number of bilateral agreements between USM and overseas universities to promote staff exchange.

2.6 Student Exchange

Student exchange has not taken a serious role in the internationalisation programme until the formation of SSAS in 1984 and the advent of CUSAC in 1993. Hitherto, student exchanges were ad hoc in nature and left to the Student Representative Council and the various student bodies. Example of activities conducted by these bodies include short visits to some foreign universities, cultural exchanges particularly among universities in neighbouring countries, and the organisation of international student conferences and games from time to time. Recently a consortium of eight universities in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand established what is now known as the IMT-GT Uninet to promote cultural exchanges among students as an annual event.

Although the above activities are significant in terms of internationalisation, they hardly take the form of a study-abroad programme.

3. USM's Student Study Abroad Scheme (SSAS)

In consonance with USM's quest to lead and innovate for excellence internationally and to provide a holistic development to the individual student as enshrined in USM's mission, the then Vice-Chancellor mooted the idea of developing a Student Study Abroad Scheme in 1984 to enable participating students to take a short stint of study (at least 1 semester) abroad. It was felt that such an exposure would broaden the students experience, enable him to develop an international perspective, teach him to appreciate a culture other than his own, and make him appreciate the adequacy or otherwise of his own background and training. In the final analysis, it was hoped that a SSAS student would emerge as a better individual and a student leader who would in turn influence his other colleagues to achieve excellence, to appreciate their role in a global world, to make the best of the opportunities available to them and to develop holistically as individuals with full appreciation of their responsibility in an era of globalisation.

SSAS was formally adopted by the University at the 54th Senate meeting on 24 October 1984.

3.1 SSAS - In the Eighties

The adoption of SSAS prompted every School in the University to take various initiatives to implement the Scheme but the going then was not smooth for a variety of reasons. Student apprehension about spending time abroad and hence delay their graduation was chief among the reasons for lack of enthusiasm. Schools were not keen about accepting transfer of credits as such a system was not well-entrenched then. There were also lack of funding and difficulties in identifying receiving universities which were keen on participating in a Study Abroad Programme.

Although there were difficulties in sending students abroad, most felt that there was no problem in hosting foreign students. Students from the University of Hull UK, University of Minnesota USA and Murdoch University Australia have frequently taken reasonably long periods of study (one semester to a year). To date a total of 91 stu-

dents from these universities have followed one programme or another at USM over the years. There were other universities from a number of countries that have sent their students but less frequently and the stay is much shorter.

3.2 SSAS - In the Nineties

The formation of CUSAC in 1993 and the inclusion of USM as a member of CUSAC, gave greater impetus to USM's Study Abroad Scheme. Responsibility for implementing this Scheme and that of CUSAC's objectives was shifted from the Student Affairs Department to the International Office under the Deputy Registrar [Academic]. The then Vice-Chancellor of USM gave the International Office full support and often encouraged Heads of Department to give priority to both SSAS and CUSAC. As a result of this emphasis, USM have sent 107 students abroad in the last 4 years - a feat that seems to be quite impossible in the past. A total of 97 students were received in the same time period under the Study Abroad Scheme.

3.2.1 Participating Students

3.2.1.1 USM Students Studying Abroad Under SSAS

The table shows the breakdown of USM students studying abroad under SSAS in the last 4 years: it will be noted that very few (4)

Year	Total no. sent	Disciplines involved	Recipient universities
1994	4	Humanities, Communication	Minnesota, British Columbia
1995	15	Mathematics, Comm., Management, Humanities, Chem. Engineering, Biology	University of Adelaide, Murdoch, Western Australia, IIT, Gustavus A. College, Hull, UBC, Minnesota
1996	29	Housing, Management, Comm., Physics, Maths, Humanities, Biology, Electronic Engineering	Murdoch, Adelaide, Singapore (SIF), Nanyang (SIF), Curtin, Western Australia, Minnesota, Gustavus, British Columbia, Hull, Lingkoping, UTS, Victoria, ITT, College Cork Ireland
1997	59	Science, Applied Sc., Pharmacy, Computer, Soc. Sc., Comm., Management, Translation, English & Lit., Materials Eng., Civil Eng., Mechanical Eng., Chemical Eng., Housing, Humanities	Curtin, Edith Cowan, Gustavus, Hong Kong University, IIT, Linkoping, Mercuria, Murdoch, NTU, NUS, Tampere Poly., Tampere University, UTS, University College Cork, University of Adelaide, UBC, University of Guelph, Hull, Minnesota, University of Sydney, University of Western Australia, Victoria
Total	107		

students participated in SSAS in the initial years following revival. The number increases dramatically to reach 59 students in 1997. The number of participating receiving universities also increases dramatically from 2 to 22 over the 4 years period. In addition, interest among students was no longer confined to the arts but spread to the sciences and professional courses as well.

3.2.1.2 Foreign Students Participating in SSAS

The table below shows the number of foreign students to which USM played host under SSAS:

Similar to participating USM students, the number of foreign students to whom USM played host significantly increases over the 4 years period and the number of sending universities also increases significantly. This number did not include foreign students studying for short periods under the Non-graduating Scheme.

Year	Total no. sent	Disciplines involved	Sending universities
1994	11	Communication, Humanities	Hull, Murdoch, Minnesota
1995	15	Management, Biology, Mathematics	Hull, Murdoch, Minnesota
1996	26	Communication, Housing, Management, Humanities, Mathematics	Linkoping, Murdoch, UTS, Western Australia, Victoria, British Columbia, Minnesota, Osaka, Tokyo, Adelaide, Hull, Humbolt, Milan, Denmark
1997	20 (1st sem) 25 (2nd sem)	Soc. Sciences, Management, Communication, Language Study & Translation	Victoria, Hull, Tampere Poly, Tampere Univ., Linkoping, Adelaide, Minnesota, Osaka, De Comte, Curtin, Western Australia, UTS, British Columbia, Gustavus, Humbolt, Milan, Sydney
Total	97		

3.2.2 Participating Universities

3.2.2.1 Existing co-operation

There are a total of 27 universities currently participating in USM's Study Abroad Scheme. (* = CUSAC member)

United Kingdom
1. University of Hull *

Australia
2. Murdoch University
3. Edith Cowan University *
4. University of Adelaide *
5. University of Western Australia
6. University of Curtin
7. University of Sydney *
8. University of Technology Sydney

Singapore
9. Nanyang Technological University *
10. National University of Singapore

Canada
11. University of British Columbia *
12. University of Victoria
13. University of Guelph *

India
14. Indian Institute of Technology *

Hong Kong
15. Hong Kong University

Ireland
16. University College of Cork

USA
17. University of Minnesota
18. Gustavus Adolphus College

Sweden
19. Linkoping Universitatet

Finland
20. Mercuria Business School
21. Tampere Polytechnic
22. Tampere University

France
23. University De Comte (only incoming students)

Germany
24. Humbolt University (only incoming students)

Japan
25. Osaka City University (only incoming students)
26. Osaka University of Foreign Studies (only incoming students)

Hungary
27. University of Milan (only incoming students)

3.2.2.2 Future co-operation

13 universities have agreed in principle to participate in this programme and are in the process of signing MoUs:

Sweden
1. University of Lund

Switzerland
2. University of St. Gallen, Zurich
3. University of Uppsala

Australia
4. Australian National University *
5. University of Queensland

Netherlands
6. Universite Van Amsterdam
7. Leiden University

Canada
8. Dalhouise University *

UK
9. University of Salford
10. University of Nottingham
11. University of Birmingham

France
12. Universite de Franche- Comte

13. Universite Joseph Fourier- Grenoble

3.2.2.3 Possible co-operation

6 universities have been contacted and may participate in the near future.

USA
1. Syracuse University
2. Northern Illinois University
3. Ohio University

Canada
4. University of Waterloo

Australia
5. University of Tasmania

New Zealand
6. University of Auckland

4. The Management Process

Although SSAS at USM began in the eighties, the management then was largely 'ad hoc' and unco-ordinated. Both staff and students were not fully aware of SSAS and the need to spend a short period of study abroad. Hence when the International Office was entrusted with the task of managing SSAS, it has little example to follow and had literally to start from scratch. The following processes had to be put in place.

- Promotion of the Scheme
- Policy Formulation
- Organising the Administrative Support Structure
- Funding
- Developing the Scheme

4.1 Promotion of the Scheme

4.1.1 Promotion within the University

Much of the experience of USM has been as a host university. Schools readily accept foreign students to take up courses of study for 1 to 2 semesters provided there were no special requirements to be met.

But when it came to sending students abroad, there were some serious initial misgivings among both students and staff as well as some Heads of Department contrary to the belief that a stint abroad would be most welcomed particularly by students. Some of these misgivings were:

Among academic staff:

a) Should credit transfer be allowable without scrutiny of content, examination requirements etc of courses offered for transfer.

b) Should students be allowed to credit courses as 'core' courses or should credit transfer be confined only to 'option' and 'elective' courses.

c) Participating in the Scheme would disrupt the sequence of study.

d) Students may have to spend an extra semester to graduate if they were to participate in this Scheme.

e) 'Quality' of the foreign university and the different system of assessment would be a cause for concern.

Among students:

a) Concern for cost of living overseas

b) Worry that they might need to spend an extra semester to graduate

c) Uncertainty of how they will perform academically overseas.

d) Uncertainty of whether the units acquired overseas will be credited.

e) Worry of cultural differences particularly among Muslim students.

f) Worry about their English language proficiency.

Among Heads of Department:

a) Difficulty in establishing meaningful partnerships with foreign universities.

b) A lot of effort expanded only to benefit a few students.

The initial misgivings have now been largely overcome. The Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs) played a vital role in promoting the virtues of SSAS to Head of Departments, staff and students. Deans and Deputy Deans rallied behind the International Office and indeed without their co-operation and assistance in overcoming particularly students apprehension, making SSAS a success would have become almost impossible. As SSAS proceeded from year to year, returning students also assisted in spreading the virtues of studying abroad and the wonderful experience they have had. In addition, appropriate academic policies were formulated (see policy formulation) to overcome fears about being out phase and the non-transfer of credit.

4.1.2 Promotion of SSAS with Foreign Universities

SSAS can only be successful if there are receiving universities (foreign universities) willing to accept and provide support to students from the sending universities.

In the case of USM, we undertake to provide the following assistance to foreign students under the Scheme:

a) Free accommodation in one of the residential halls in campus.

b) No tuition fees will be charged if the partner universities grant the same waiver to USM students.

c) A small monthly stipend may be provided to students in special cases.

In attempting to send students to foreign universities, it is imperative that these universities appreciate the importance of providing adequate support to our students. We expect tuition fees will not be charged and that free or at least cheap accommodation will be provided. We will not be able to persuade students to take a SSAS slot in a university that will not do likewise especially if the cost involved is high. In addition, USM students should be allowed to register for courses of their choice since they alone can decide which course can be credited to their programs of study at USM.

In our experience, it took much time and persistence to negotiate for SSAS places in foreign universities even with CUSAC members. To date only 20 out of the 107 places available to USM students are from CUSAC members. While most universities are appreciative of the need to waive tuition fees, many are not able to provide accommodation let alone free accommodation. It would be appreciated that the latter is vital to ensure that students can adapt quickly to their new environment especially when their stay is short.

4.2 Policy Formulation

The following policies were formulated to guide and facilitate SSAS in its implementation.

4.2.1 Academic Policies

- The period spent by a student in an overseas university will be regarded as part of the minimum residential requirements for graduation.

- A minimum period of 10 weeks stay and a minimum of 10 credits registered shall be recognised as fulfilling one semester local residential requirement.
- Transfer of credits will be allowed provided the courses taken are considered equivalent to the courses offered by his/her School.
- To overcome the possibility of courses registered in a foreign university being regarded as non-equivalent, students should receive prior approval of the Deans of their respective Schools before registering.

The above policies in many ways help to overcome USM's student apprehension regarding their academic and residential requirements for graduation.

To facilitate foreign students taking courses at USM which are mainly taught in Malay, the following policies were enunciated:

- Foreign students who are not proficient in Malay, may register for Malay language courses conducted by the Language Centre.
- They may opt to register only for courses that are taught in English especially by expatriate lecturers who are permitted to teach and examine wholly in English even at the undergraduate level.
- Students may opt to register for postgraduate courses that are taught mainly in English.
- Students are permitted to do independent study under the guidance of the lecturers concerned if they register for courses taught in Malay in which they are not proficient.

4.2.2 Criteria for Student Selection

To participate in the Scheme, a USM student should:

- have a good academic record
- have a good command of English
- be active in co-curricular activities
- have good financial standing (at least able to pay for their passage and to support themselves while abroad)
- Priority is given to students who are at least in their second year of study to ensure that they have reached a certain level of maturity and be able to adapt themselves in a foreign country.
- With regard to foreign students, the selection is left entirely to the sending universities

4.2.3 Choice of Partner Universities

- CUSAC members and MoU shall be given preference as partner universities.
- All arrangements regarding number of students, courses of study, duration of stay, and support provided to each other's students shall be enshrined in an official Agreement or a Memorandum of Understanding.
- All partner universities will be expected to accord USM students with at least the support provided by USM, itself to students from partner universities.

4.2.4 Participation Rate

- All Schools are required to encourage their students to participate in SSAS.

- A target of at least 1% participation in each School should be achieved by the year 2000.

4.3 Organising the Administrative Support Structure

When SSAS was first formulated in 1984, the responsibility for implementation was left to the individual Schools. Later in 1993, the Department of Student Affairs was entrusted with the function. Progress was slow probably because the School and the Department of Student Affairs have many other pressing duties and are understaffed. The International Office under the Registry was specially created to deal with international relations and saw the assignment of SSAS to it in 1994 as an added responsibility but nevertheless an appropriate assignment and a challenge worth taking. A desk officer was immediately assigned to deal with SSAS and to make the necessary initial contacts with partner universities to obtain places for USM students. A panel of interviewers to select students for the Scheme was formed under the chairmanship of the Registrar. Pamphlets and handbooks were designed and distributed to both incoming and outgoing students giving them the relevant information to make their stay more comfortable and rewarding. In short, the International Office became a one-point stop to deal with all matters regarding SSAS and this in many ways has helped to popularise SSAS in USM and to expand its scope of operation.

4.4 Funding

Funding has not been a particularly important factor in the success of SSAS as almost all USM students sent abroad were able to fund at least their passage and stay in the participating universities. The provision of free or low-budget accommodation plus waiver of tuition fees have significantly helped to make funding even less important. However, if students were to require financial support, they could apply for a grant or a loan from a fund set up from a RM50,000.00 yearly allocation from the Vice-Chancellor and operated by the International Office.

4.5 Developing the Scheme

As has been indicated earlier, the number of students and universities participating in SSAS has increased dramatically over the last 4 years. A number of factors contributed to this development. Among these are:

4.5.1 Role of Students as Catalysts

Participating students who returned from overseas act as 'catalysts'. The International Office requires every student returning from overseas to conduct a seminar regarding their experiences. This helps to spur further interest in SSAS among other students.

4.5.2 Excellent Performance

Almost every SSAS student performed well overseas and this encourages and gives confidence to others to take part. A number of student were placed on the Dean's Lists:

- Bernard Surinder, Chauly Junior (Communication), 1994/95, University of Minnesota
- Farida Yusuf (Applied Sciences Biology), 1995/96, University of Minnesota
- Lee Chia Yee, 1995/96, University of Minnesota
- Phoon Chee Wai,1995/96, Indian Institute of Technology

4.5.3 Financial Assistance

The availability of a fund to assist students allow those less fortunate to participate.

4.5.4 Marketing

Widespread marketing to potential candidates helps to 'create' interest and eliminate the fear to participate.

4.5.5 Presence of Foreign Students

Foreign students in USM's campus act as 'ambassadors' of their countries. They contribute much to the awareness and eagerness of our students to explore the outside world. At the same time these foreign students help to encourage their friends to come to USM.

4.5.6 Deans' Support

Active participation of Deans help tremendously in the development of SSAS.

4.5.7 Chief Executive's Support

The Vice-Chancellor's constant support and monitoring is another vital contributory factor to the success of this Scheme.

4.5.8 Staff Dedication

Dedication of the staff in the Academic Section of the Registry particularly the Desk Officer of the International Office is another important factor.

4.5.9 Making Use of Feedback

Constant evaluation of this Scheme is carried out through questionnaires completed and reports made by both our returning students and foreign students at USM. From this feedback, we have been able to improve:

- Our departure and welcoming service to students.
- Our publications to assist students prepare for their stay and get adjusted to the local environment.
- Our Student Welfare Services.

5. The Challenges Ahead - SSAS in the Context of an Expansion

If the 1% target as set out by USM were to be met, the number of student places that need to be secured overseas, in the next 5 years will be as follows:

Year	Projected First Degree Student Enrolment	Number of Places Required
1997	11,000	110
1998	12,500	125
1999	14,000	140
2000	15,500	155
2001	16,500	165

Within the context of the principle of reciprocating as practised by USM in all its bilateral relations with foreign universities, then there will be an equal number of foreign students offered places at USM.

For the year 1997, 59 places have been secured in participating universities while 45 foreign students have confirmed to enrol at USM under SSAS. By the middle of the year, it would be expected that participating universities will take up all the places at USM to equal the number of students USM will sent. This however means that SSAS has not yet met the target set out by USM but USM is confident not only will it do so in the near future but will surpass the target provided certain problems facing the programme can be satisfactorily resolved and certain conditions met. These are as follows:

5.1 Co-operation from Participating Universities

If all CUSAC member universities were to offer 2 places each to USM, then the number of places that can be secured from CUSAC

members alone will be 90 compared to the present 20 places from only 8 CUSAC members. Many CUSAC members are reluctant to accept USM students when they are required to waiver fees and to provide free or cheap accommodation. USM students on the other hand, will be reluctant to participate in the programme if the cost involved is too high. If the conditions imposed by USM to participating universities are waived, then USM will remain always a host university and not a sending university which is contrary to the objectives of SSAS and those of CUSAC.

5.2 Student Preference

From our experience, students prefer to go to universities that they are familiar with or have heard of particularly those in developed countries. Cost of living also influences their choice. Thus universities in Australia, US, Canada and UK are the preferred universities with those in UK preferred last in the list because of perceived high cost of living. Universities in Europe and Japan are less preferred as they are mostly unfamiliar to the students. Universities in the less developed countries are preferred last although they are well-reputed universities. Much, therefore has to be done to ensure that student preference is not biased towards any particular university or country.

5.3 Language of Instruction

Some participating universities do not teach in English. Although USM does not teach all courses in English, there are many that are and besides special provisions (as elaborated earlier) are made to enable foreign students to follow the desired courses even if they are taught in Malay. Perhaps participating universities that use language other than English may wish to emulate USM's provisions.

5.4 Semester Structure

Different semester structure and commencement dates may hinder smooth exchange. Special provisions may need to be devised to ease the implementation of the exchange programme.

5.5 Lack of Facilities

Foreign students particularly from developed countries take time to adjust to what little we have compared to what they are used to. Some of them commented adversely on the lack of computer facilities, lack of residential hall facilities like telephones, hot water, private room, private bath etc - things that they were apparently used to back home. But all of them agreed that this lack of facilities was more than balanced up by the extremely cheap cost of living and the warmth and friendliness of USM students and all those they have met. While this is most heartening to us, we will however need to improve on our facilities so that this factor will become less of a hindrance. USM expects to complete building an International House in the near future.

5.6 Funding

While funding has not been a problem to USM students and to SSAS so far, this will be anticipated to be a cause for concern especially when number increases and participation becomes more widespread to include students who are not as well-endowed as others. Nevertheless if all participating universities especially CUSAC members agree to keep participation costs as low as possible, funding will be expected to continue to be less of a problem. USM will continue to canvass for support from governmental agencies and other sponsoring bodies to assist in the funding requirements.

5.7 Support from the Top

In our experience, the Vice-Chancellor and the Deans together constitute an important driving force behind the success of the programme. They must be seen continuously to be involved, concerned and visible. Their involvement in particular will help dispel student fears and staff apprehension about the Study Abroad program.

5.8 Visit of Program Administrators to Participating Universities

The success, future development and expansion of the Study Abroad Scheme are also dependence to a large extent on the commitment, initiative, motivation, goodwill and understanding that prevail among the program administrators in the participating universities. There is no better way to ensure that this will continue to prevail other than through exchange of visits to each others university. The participating universities should be prepared to fund such visits from time to time.

6. The Future

We conclude by saying that we have every reason to believe that there is hope for the future for SSAS and CUSAC and none at all for despair. This hope stems from the joy we have seen all round and in everyone involved especially those who matter most - our students. Let us now share some of their comments:

6.1 Extracts of Students' Comments

Incoming Students

Sending University: University of Hull

Comments

Western students, in general value their privacy greatly. That means that most would want a single room. It is a sad fact, but to me, many of *my* course-mates are not flexible enough to try and live in other ways. For me, it has been an invaluable experience living and sharing with Malaysian students.

Overall, the facilities and the campus are very enjoyable, and of a high quality. I would certainly recommend any (overseas) student to come here. (As long as they understand that they must be flexible). The sports facilities are fantastic and socially, people on campus are very very friendly, if, at first, a little reserved (naturally).

I am very proud and privileged to have studied here and shared many things here. The experience has educated me more than any book could.

Sending University: University of Minnesota

Comments

I had heard some horror stories about past exchange students being herded from one office to the other and nobody knowing what to do with their forms. But, I had no problems what-so-ever. I was extremely impressed with how efficiently your office handled things. It seemed too easy to me given the stories had I heard! One thing I would have found helpful, however, is a list of other possible courses in English (or Co-curricular classes that were in BM that I could follow, like the traditional dance class I took) that I could have registered for if I wanted to.

I also have to compliment you on your handling of my visa. Again, I had heard numerous "horror" stories about not getting our visa until the end of the semester, having to buy two visas, having to leave the country in order to get their visa. Not only did you arrange to have this done quickly and efficiently, but you also arranged transportation to the office, sent someone to make sure it went well and even had someone pick up our passports later on in the day! VERY impressive!

One problem that I had in "socialising" on campus is that most of the information about clubs, trips, activities, performances, etc. are in Malay. It wasn't until just recently that my Malay improved enough that I could usually at least understand enough of these signs to ask someone what it really said if it sparked my interest.

Overall, I have been very impressed with how the exchange has been run over here in Malaysia. Compared to other past exchange students' experiences, you have done a very good job organizing things and are VERY helpful. I want not only to congratulate you on these improvements, but also take this opportunity to thank everyone at Antarabangsa.

Sending University: Murdoch University

Comments

Above all, I think it is important to ensure that foreign students have adequate BM before starting regular USM courses. There also needs to be a greater level of co-ordination between the schools and the International office.

Bulletin board for foreign students of upcoming events (in English) - several abbreviations e g. MPP are hard for foreign students to follow. A foreign students night (must invite Malaysian friends/partner)? A host-family for each student (meet once a month for dinner to discuss ideas, experiences, problems)? Phones (call-in only) in student rooms?

Sending University: University of Victoria

Comments

While there is an appreciable difference between Malaysia and the "West" in terms of financial resources and national priorities, I would still have to conclude that the number of library holdings at the USM was adequate.

The faculty and staff at the USM are of the highest calibre. They are a dedicated staff of professionals, man of whom have earned at least a portion of their academic credentials from a "western" university. The professors that I came into contact with were all Ph.Ds and all surprisingly knowledgeable about our system of education. This may have contributed to their warm and friendly disposition, and willingness to empathize with my situation. Proof of this is captured in a little story I would be pleased to share. It will, in my opinion, provide the reader with a better understanding of the faculty, and could be generalizable to the broader Malaysian society. It is a story I call *The Introduction*.

It was about 6.30 pm on a hot June in Penang, Malaysia. After a twenty minute trek from my room, located clear across the campus, I took a seat in a crowded classroom.

The subject of tonight's lecture was International Business Management, one that I was very keen to learn more about. Within a few minutes, a tall slim Indian man walked through a side door located at the front of the room. Coincidentally, the room fell silent; this was most assuredly the professor.Again the professor spoke: "We know where America is. We know where Australia is. We know where Britain is. Right?" The air filled with a resounding "Yes!"

Before introducing himself he took several long strides down the isle that dissects the room into two halves. Stopping, scanning the sea of faces he said, "Many of you have travelled to other parts of the world. Many of you have studied at foreign universities. Have you ever heard a 'Westerner' ask: Where is Malaysia? Is it an island near Singapore? Is it in Africa?" They laughed and nodded their heads in agreement. In a raised voice the professor called out "Westerners are so ignorant! Aren't they?" I began to sweat more in the cool air than I had during my long hike in the sweltering heat. I was suffering from his comment and the reply of this less than supportive cohort. I felt like I was about to be thrashed because of somebody else's stupidity. While it was true I did not know everything about Malaysia, I did know it wasn't part of Africa, or a part of the geographically dwarf but economically gigantic Singapore. All I could think was "I'm doomed".

In a disarming stance, with his arms stretched, palms facing out, he asked "Could any of you tell me who the Prime Minister of Thailand is?" The room turned quiet. He asked again, "Could anyone tell me who the Prime Minister of Thailand is?" I could not help but think to myself: "What a peculiar thing to ask".

The enthusiasm in the room seemed to evaporate as if, all at once, everybody had the wind knocked out of them by a boxer's strategically placed glove to the belly. Calling out names one at a time from a student roster, the professor continued to pursue this daunting question. The mood turned sombre as everybody soon realized that their names could be called out at any moment, forcing them to admit their ignorance in front of a roomful of fiercely competitive students. No one was willing, or able to produce the answer.

After several scornful remarks from the professor, one student, smugly replied "There have been so many Prime Ministers, how are we expected to remember?" The professor agreed, and politely asked this individual to elaborate. "Does this mean the country is politically unstable? Does this mean the country is risky?" The student replied in the affirmative. "What about Italy?" asked the professor. "Is it also risky?" After all, they have had some fifty leaders in the past fifty years. Right?" With student eyes permanently fixed on their table tops, the professor asked. "Okay then, can any of you tell me who the President of the United States is?" Arms shot-up into the air like rockets. Everybody was eager to redeem themselves. The professor bowed his head in a display of shame. In the most cutting remark the professor spoke "Okay, before any of you go criticizing our Western friends, whom you are all so familiar, consider how stupid all of us are. None of you could tell me who our neighbour to the North is, and yet you are all so eager to tell me about the West."

After a prolonged pause the professor turned to me and said "I hope all of you will help me in welcoming a new student to Malaysia. He is visiting us for a single semester from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. I hope you will give him an opportunity to get to know you better so that he can take back some stories about Malaysia worth talking about. Maybe then, more people will want to know more about us."

I will never forget this clever man for his introduction and its powerful message, nor all the other information he shared with me while I lived in Malaysia.

I arrived on campus a couple of weeks early. This gave me the advantage of moving-in before my two roommates arrive. I enjoyed the space and the privacy. I had all my things neatly folded and stacked, and my shoes by the door in a row.

One afternoon, I came home to find a guest. This was a welcome treat, after all, I was get-

ting a bit stir crazy with all the quiet. His name was Koay. Chinese. Nice kid. Physics student with an unbelievable work ethic - day and night, night and day. He hardly ever slept. We didn't really talk too much, he always seemed too busy. After a few more days, the third man moved in. His name was Din. Malay. English Lit. student. Closer to me in age. For what ever reason, I expected things to get easier for me with a room full of people. It didn't. Every time I walked in or out of the room I would get the strangest looks. I had no idea why.

One afternoon, when speaking to a group of foreign student I happened to mention how I wear my shoes everywhere. "What! Everywhere?" was the response. I couldn't help but wonder what was so wrong with this little detail. What they told me was that it was considered offensive behaviour to wear shoes in the house. "Shoes must be removed outside and placed facing the wall". "How was I to know?" I thought.

Later that same day, I returned to my room with a different routine. I removed my shoes outside and walked in barefoot. When I entered the room, my two roommates immediately turned and looked at my feet. I stood there smugly waiting for a gasp. Their eyes left my feet and shifted up to my face. They greeted me with a smile that stretched from ear to ear.

Things got infinitely better after that day. We had an open and honest discussion that concluded with both of my friends agreeing to help me fit it. I was also advised to get a pair of slippers. Wearing socks and having to tie and untie shoes seemed like a lot of work. I took their advice.

Outgoing Students: USM

Receiving University: University of Western Australia

Comments

The very first thing I would like to mention is, "I have made the right choice!" For those who are offered to go to Australia, please do not be afraid and be scared away by the much sensationalised media reporting. From my experience, I would say that the majority are still very friendly, and even more well-mannered and courteous than some of our Malaysians here! Just bear in mind that racism happens in every part of the world, I think there is no society or nation that is devoid of a level of racism. Racial intolerance has become a real part of political culture.

The fact of the matter is be yourself, be open-minded, behave yourself, be more confident and adventurous and also, be prepared for everything! One must be aware that one has to leave the much-take-for-granted home to study abroad. One also has to leave the comforts and conveniences, the familiar and the known. It will be a very challenging time for one to venture into the unfamiliar world. The most important thing is to know what you want and go for it confidently. Like the Aussies say, "No worries!", be happy and have a "fair dinkum" great time!

Receiving University: University of Minnesota

Comments

Before applying to a particular university and choosing the courses offered, it is of utmost importance to consult the Dean, Pengerusi Rancangan and Academic Advisors. This is to ensure that the courses chosen are equivalent to the courses in USM and fulfil the requirements of the university.

Lectures are conducted by the lecturers, sometimes with the aid of their teaching assistants. What I found most fascinating was the extensive use of computers as a tool for teaching. In one of the courses I took, the Professor conducted classes using projections from a computer.

His classes were always interesting because he would play music from the CD before every class and use extensive computer graphics during his lectures. Lecturers at this university also use lots of picture slides so the students can actually visualise what is being taught. Apart from this, there are also a lot of field trips and guess speakers who explain the practicality behind the theory of everything we learn.

In general, everybody in Minnesota hates winter. This is due to the fact that it can be incredibly and unbearably cold. Incidentally, Minnesota experienced its longest and coldest winter since 1892 while I was there. The temperature dropped to a record-breaking -55^{o} C!

The four seasons are not divided equally in Minnesota. You can hardly get to enjoy Autumn and Spring, as Winter is much longer here. Winter time while I was there began in the middle of Autumn and ended in late Spring! Everyone simply hated it. I, on the other hand, LOVED it! After all, it's not like we ever get to enjoy the cold weather and snow in Malaysia. In fact, I just could not get enough of it!

Much to my disappointment and everyone else's delight, winter finally made way for Spring. Spring is, however, a beautiful time of year. After seeing everything white for so long, the sudden greenery is pretty dazzling. Everything, and everyone around suddenly looks so alive and vibrant. This is the time where you can hear the sounds of birds chirping on the trees and the sight and scent of fresh flowers brings about this sudden gush of energy sadly missed during winter. I speak with great passion of these seasons because I saw great beauty in both Winter and Spring. It was simply incredibly to witness the transformation from the brilliantly pure and white winter to the lush and vibrant greenery of Spring.

I would sincerely like to thank the instigator and all those who were involved in the Study Abroad Program for giving me the opportunity to experience what I would consider the most educational, memorable and wonderful six months. The knowledge and experienced gained was indeed immense, and I would strongly recommend anyone interested in this program do not let this chance of a life time pass by you. It has truly been an enriching experience for me and I am sure it will be for you too.

Receiving University: University of Minnesota

Comments

I left Minneapolis Airport on 27 June 1996, after spending more than 6 months in USA. As the plane turned into the runaway, memories of my time in USA came flooding back. I remembered my very first scene of the airport when it was all covered in snow. Now there were green leaves on the trees and the sun was shining It looked so different and I felt so different. I came with a fearful heart and worried look on my face. I left with a smile and a vast amount of experiences and friends from all over the world. I know I have changed in many ways - in my thoughts, my outlook of people, the world and of myself. Gone are my days of being a "frog under the coconut shell" and of ignorance of a world outside. My trip to the land of opportunity was just that - filled with opportunities and memorable experiences. And you know what? I know I'll go back there one day....!

Favourite people,
Favourite places,

Favourite memories of the past,
These are the joys of a lifetime,
These are the things that last.

Receiving University: University of British Columbia

Comments

I guess the things I learnt most during my stay there was not much from the classroom but my experiences outside the classroom. I was all alone in a foreign land and that was the first time ever I had to live alone for so long. In that few months, I had to learn to adapt to my surroundings, make new friends, and learn to be independent and to survive on my own. I had to keep an open mind regarding all aspects especially since I was in a western culture. I have now learned to think more rationally and open attitude towards many things in life.

I did not realize six months had passed. It felt like I arrived only yesterday. Although six months were short for me they were the best six months of my life. Sweet memories came flooding back as I sat in the plane, taking off to bring me back to my own land. I never regretted going there even once. I strongly recommend anyone interested to apply for the University of British Columbia as there is so much to do there.

Receiving University: University of British Columbia

Comments

An effective exchange program will certainly strengthen the bilateral ties between USM and UBC and encourage mutual co-operation between the two institutions. An effective exchange program also provides an invaluable experience for students to extend the boundaries of their knowledge and experience into cultures and lifestyles other than their own. I am fortunate to have been part of this enriching program and I sincerely hope that even more students will benefit from it in the future.

Receiving University: University of Adelaide

Comments

The USM Study Abroad Programme is by far the most exciting opportunity available to students of USM. I feel extremely fortunate to have been chosen to represent USM as an exchange student to the University of Adelaide.

It's funny how being overseas has heightened my appreciation for all things Malaysian. It has instilled in me a greater sense of patriotism and has induced me to want to learn more about the local cultures and peoples, especially about the East Malaysian cultures which I'm not very familiar with. I also find it rather sad that many foreigner know so little about Malaysia. It gave me great pleasure to tell my friends about my country.

Summing up the benefits I've gained from my semester abroad, I would say that the most important thing I've learnt from my Australian stint is that I have a whole lot more to learn about! I think that this realisation is going to carry me much further in life.

Receiving University: Gustavus Adolphus College, Saint Peter, Minnesota

Comments

I enjoy all the four classes which I think were more challenging than here as the grading system is very high and lots of course works given for each class. What's more, my experiences in Minnesota for five months teach me to be independent, more positive, tougher and more confident to myself. Not much to say I think that this program made me a better person.

Receiving University: University of Hull

Comments

I'm proud to say that our own lecturers in Mathematics department are just as proficient and of the same high calibre as the lecturers in Hull. There is another vivid contrast between the students in Hull and our students here. I noticed that in most of the lectures that I attended in Hull, there was always an active participation of students during lectures and tutorials. The students were very keen in questioning the lecturers and especially so in Applied Analysis, one of the modules that I took and the feedback from the lecturer was very encouraging. The lecturers were very friendly and helpful. I enjoyed attending the lectures as I learnt and gained additional information from the active participation in class. Lectures were rarely dull. Students back home here are more passive and shy comparatively to the students abroad although they may excel academically.

To conclude, overseas education is not a bed of roses. It requires discipline and independence for academic excellence. Albeit the hard work, suffice it to say that I enjoyed myself in UK. The experience I gained in these 6 months has made an impact on my life. I believe that I have returned a more mature person. My most valuable gain from UK are the many friends I have made. These will last a lifetime.

Receiving University: Indian Institute of Technology

Comments

Getting adapted to the sudden change was not as easy as what I expected. First, I was surrounded by all the top students of India. They were sharp, brilliant and smart. Unlike students from Malaysia, they participated actively in the class, thus making the atmosphere lively and stimulating. At times, I could not even get the point they were arguing about because their analysing power was great, and most of all they spoke too fast.

I only wish I could know more Hindi. It was nice to speak Hindi with the locals and understand their conversation. It was essential to know some fundamental Hindi as it helped me in conveying messages and bargaining too. I felt myself being absorbed into the community as I learned more Hindi and I started to appreciate Hindi movies too. I learned most of my Hindi from friends and through some books. Sometimes I just wished IIT would offer a course on Hindi.

Living under a total different environment with unique cultural background was very stimulating. I learned a lot of Indian culture and experienced a wonderful episode of my life.

Studying in a world class institute was an eye-opener for me. The high academic standard, experienced lecturers and brilliant students though gave me a great pressure in my academic life, helped me to grow up at the same time. My analysing power were greatly sharpened. My English has improved. And I have tasted something new, Hindi. I found a lot of good friends who gave me a wonderful time during my five month stay.

Life outside the campus offered me a much more exciting adventure. Experiencing snow and desert was part of the most exciting and education one. Experiencing both the city and village life of India gave me a true insight of living conditions of the people.

I was nourished by India.

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